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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002496

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [KISL](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: SPOTTY RESPONSE TO CALL FOR GENERAL STRIKE;  
ACTIVISTS DETAINED

REF: A. AMMAN 2452

[1](#)B. AMMAN 2404

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 b and d

[1](#)1. ( SBU )The Islamic Action Front,s call for a two-hour general strike April 9 met with a mixed response. In several East Amman lower middle-class neighborhoods known for Islamist sympathies, poloff observed between one quarter and one half of shops closed on some commercial streets. Several of these displayed photocopied notices that they closed to protest the fuel price increases that went into effect April [1](#)8. Traffic was lighter than usual in these areas. As expected, we saw no evidence the strike was being observed in affluent West Amman. More surprisingly, there was no visible support for the strike in the bustling Wihdat refugee camp either. One shopkeeper told poloff &we,re too poor to close for even one hour.[8](#)

[1](#)2. ( U ) At the professional associations headquarters in Amman, about 200 activists from the Islamic Action Front and the associations demonstrated peacefully. The Front has called for a sit-in to be staged in front of the parliament building on April 10. According to one local newspaper, the Front was denied a permit for the demonstration but has pledged to go ahead with it nevertheless.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In Ma,an, a traditional trouble spot, a university professor told PD Counselor that almost all shopkeepers there observed the strike. In contrast, a community activist in Zarqa - one of the poorest towns in Jordan - told poloff that she saw only a few businesses closed for the strike.

[1](#)4. ( U ) There have been no reports of violence. Labor unions did not join the strike.

Detentions  
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[1](#)5. ( C ) Beginning April 6, GOJ security services reportedly began detaining activists of the Islamic Action Front who were campaigning in support of the strike. Contacts close to the Front told poloffs dozens had been detained, and the arrests were still ongoing April 9. Post will report further on the alleged detentions as more information becomes available.

HALE